

Vegetation MOU Working Group  
December 12, 2002 meeting notes

Next meeting March 5, 2003 9-noon Fed Bldg – 2800 Cottage Way

**I. Announcements**

- a. **Statewide Thematic Mapping image** – Ray McDowell reported that CERES received federal funding for a statewide Summer 2002 image (30m and 15m panchromatic), which can be freely available to others
- b. **Digital Orthophoto Quarter Quads** – Ray McDowell reported that statewide DOQQs cover 1993 to 2000 are now available statewide online at CASIL
- c. **New updated DOQQs** – Dave Hansen reported that there is a newly updated set of DOQQs for agricultural areas throughout California (not just Central Valley). USDA Farm Services Agency will be acquiring these for USDA. They are mostly in color, with some in black and white. Hansen will provide us with more information as he gets it.

**II. Classification Mapping Rules Comparison Table – Keeler-Wolf**

Todd Keeler-Wolf and Karen Converse have completed an Excel spreadsheet that relates quantitative rules between the 4 major classification systems: CalVeg, CWHR, Manual of California Vegetation, and National Veg Classification System. Each of the four tabs (one for each system) shows how each system relates to the others. This was emailed to the group today. Monica Parisi and Hazel Gordon commended Karen for the quality of the work.

The MCV system is the most detailed. Some of these classifications are not mappable, even with airphotos. Started with this classification and compared the others.

NVCS system is a mid-scale of the national classification. It uses the physiognomic group to summarize the higher hierarchical levels. The coarser Class level is too generic and the finer Formation level is too changeable.

All improvements recommended from the group at our last meeting have been made. Karen will develop better metadata and acronym definitions in the final version. Karen will also write up additional improvements that are needed, since the current money has run out. Some other funding from DFG may be available to complete these and Monica Parisi and Todd Keeler-Wolf will investigate. Before the public release, these improvements need to be made. Also need to develop separate mapping instructions.

In general, most of the types are very close to each other. The greatest challenges were among the “mixed” types (mixed forest, mixed shrub, etc).

Karen asked group members to review and refine this information and report back to her on suggested changes. Hazel Gordon, Monica Parisi, Todd Keeler-Wolf, Hugh Stafford (USFS), and others will help identify major differences.

### **III. Map Unit Design Table**

Group needs to review this and give a green-red-yellow light about which attributes can be implemented without significant financial impact. We will discuss these at the next meeting.

### **IV. Quantitative Rules for Disturbance Attributes – Keeler Wolf - Postponed**

### **V. WHR Agricultural Land Classification Needs – Parisi**

Topic postponed until Ron Schultz joins us at the next meeting

### **VI. Regional Mapping Effort**

Marc Hoshovsky asked what agencies might be interested in conducting a regional mapping project to implement the standards which the group developed. Strong interest expressed in Central Coast by USFS, CDF, BOR, UC, DFG, and CNPS, covering from Bay Area to San Luis Obispo inland to the valley floor. Julie Evens volunteered to convene a group to develop a proposal, with major steps and possibilities of funding availability. Mark Rosenberg, Brian Schwind, Todd Keeler-Wolf, and Dave Hansen will assist her. She will circulate this proposal to the entire group.

### **VII. NOAA Coastal Change Program and California Mapping**

NOAA is planning to conduct coarse-level land-cover mapping of the western half of California in the next few months, as part of a nationwide effort. No group members had been contacted by NOAA. Marc volunteered to contact NOAA and invite them to coordinate more closely with us.

### **VIII. Preliminary Ecological Systems Classification for Mediterranean California**

NatureServe is developing a national classification of ecological systems. These are a different concept than vegetation classification, targeting a broader level between Formations and Alliances. For example, this type of system can be valuable where it is difficult to map Alliances, but it's possible to map finer than Formations. It's an ecological mapping aggregation system for map units, not for vegetation classification.

A draft classification is being developed and NatureServe is looking for comments. The next version of the Manual of California Vegetation will be organized by this classification. It is similar to the mid-level of the Holland vegetation classification. The group was concerned that this was too duplicative of the mid-level classification. Todd responded that Holland was very California-focused and uneven throughout the state. This is more consistent across the state and useful in other states as well.

### **IX. MCV Update and Draft Review – postponed**

### **X. USFS Internal Vegetation Standards – Brian Schwind**

The USFS has concluded its meetings on these standards and they are currently finalizing the standards for a testing period. Brian will send these final versions out to the MOU group. They give an idea of the USFS perspective on mapping and parallels our work closely.

## **XI. Agenda ideas for next meeting**

Map Unit Design Table - green-red-yellow light about which attributes can be implemented without significant financial impact

Classification Mapping Rules Comparison Table – Keeler-Wolf –  
better metadata and acronym definitions in the final version  
additional improvements that are needed  
separate mapping instructions  
comments from others to improve  
small group identifies major differences

Quantitative Rules for Disturbance Attributes – Keeler Wolf

WHR Agricultural Land Classification Needs – Parisi

Regional Mapping Effort – review proposal and funding options

Update on newly updated set of DOQQs for agricultural areas throughout California (not just Central Valley) - Hansen